Sub-a)

1. A method of depicting a hard copy document, comprising:

    receiving in a computer a first electronic document;

    receiving in the computer a user input that selects an instruction for assembling a hard

5   copy document;

    determining in the computer a visual appearance of the first electronic document once printed and assembled in accordance with the instruction; and

    producing as output the determined visual appearance.

10 2. The method of claim 1, further comprising:

    generating a second electronic document which depicts the first electronic document once printed and assembled in accordance with the instruction; and

    displaying the second electronic document.

15 3. The method of claim 2, further comprising receiving a second user input that selects a second instruction for assembling the hard copy document, and generating a modified second electronic document which depicts the first electronic document once printed and assembled in accordance with the first and second instructions.

20 4. The method of claim 2, further comprising:

    modifying a copy of the first electronic document to generate the second electronic document.

5. The method of claim 4, wherein modifying the copy of the first electronic document

25 includes adding a tile depicting a change in the visual appearance resulting from the instruction to a page of the first electronic document.

6. The method of claim 5, further comprising retrieving the tile from a database which associates a plurality of instruction identifiers with a plurality of tiles.

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7. The method of claim 6, wherein the database includes an entry for each instruction

identifier, each entry including a instruction name and at least one tile.

8.   The method of claim 7, wherein each entry includes a first tile associated with a front page of the hard copy document, a second tile associated with an inside right page of the hard copy document, a third tile associated with an inside left page of the hard copy document, and a fourth tile associated with a final page of the hard copy document.

9.   The method of claim 8, wherein retrieving the tile includes determining whether the page of the first electronic document is a first page, an inside right page, an inside left page, or a final page, and selecting the tile based on this determination.

10.   The method of claim 8, wherein modifying the copy of the first electronic document includes inserting a page into the first electronic document, and adding a tile depicting a change in the visual appearance resulting from the instruction to the inserted page of the first electronic document.

11.   The method of claim 10, wherein the inserted page is a cover sheet, and wherein retrieving the tile includes determining whether the cover sheet is a first page or a final page, and selecting the tile based on this determination.

12.   The method of claim 1, wherein the user input is received from an electronic file.

13.   The method of claim 1, wherein the instruction identifies a printing media to be used in the hard copy document.

14.   The method of claim 13, wherein the instruction identifies the weight, color, texture, or transparency of the printing media.

15.   The method of claim 13, wherein the instruction identifies a pre-existing image on the printing media.

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16.   The method of claim 1, wherein the instruction identifies a cover to be used in the hard copy document.

17.   The method of claim 1, wherein the instruction identifies a binding to be used in the hard copy document.

18.   The method of claim 17, wherein the instruction identifies a velo™, tape, spiral, multi-ring, comb, magazine style, or stapling binding.

19.   The method of claim 1, wherein the instruction identifies a physical modification of a printing media used in the hard copy document.

20.   The method of claim 19, wherein the instruction identifies hole punching, folding or cutting of the printing media.

21.   The method of claim 1, wherein the user input is received through an interactive user interface.

22.   The method of claim 21, wherein receiving the user input includes displaying a plurality of instruction identifiers in a document assembly form on a display, and receiving a user input selecting one of the instruction identifiers.

23.   A method of displaying a finished form of a hard copy document, comprising:

        receiving and storing an electronic document in a computer;

        receiving in the computer a user input that selects an instruction for assembling a hard copy document corresponding to the electronic document;

        generating a second electronic document which depicts the visual appearance of the first electronic document once printed and assembled in accordance with the instruction; and

        displaying the second electronic document.

24.   A computer-assisted method of creating a hard copy document, comprising:

receiving an electronic document;

receiving user input that selects an instruction for assembling a hard copy document;

5   depicting a visual appearance of the electronic document once printed and assembled in accordance with the instruction; and

providing the electronic document and the user input to a document assembler.

25.   The method of claim 24, wherein the document assembler prints the electronic document

10   to create the hard copy document, and assembles the hard copy document in accordance with the instructions corresponding to the user input.

26.   The method of claim 24, further comprising creating a second electronic document which depicts the visual appearance of the hard copy document assembled in accordance with the

15   instruction.

27.   A computer program, tangibly stored on a computer-readable medium, comprising instructions for causing a computer to:

receive a first electronic document;

receiving a user input that selects an instruction for assembling a hard copy document;

20   determining in the computer the visual appearance of the first electronic document once printed and assembled in accordance with the instruction; and

producing as output the determined visual appearance.